United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1332
17 February 1993

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Although peace process in Cambodia continues to encounter "serious problems", progress is made in implementing Security Council's demand for compliance with phase II of cease-fire agreement, according to report by Secretary-General.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees suspends relief efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to "failure of all parties" to respect humanitarian principles; Co-Chairmen of Yugoslav Conference meet Russian Deputy Foreign Minister; to meet with United States special envoy tomorrow.

+ Secretary-General, in speech delivered at Waseda University in Tokyo, says Japan's support for United Nations will be crucial in post-cold war era.

+ International Atomic Energy Agency requests special inspection in Democratic People's Republic of Korea to clarify inconsistencies in declared nuclear inventory.

+ Secretary-General appoints Lieutenant-General Cevik Bir of Turkey as Force Commander of Second United Nations Operations in Somalia.

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Although the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) continues to encounter "serious problems" in its efforts to prepare the country for free and fair elections, some progress has been made, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

In a report to the Security Council, dated 13 February, on the implementation of Security Council resolution 792 of 30 November last year, the Secretary-General cites as progress the holding of the constituent assembly elections from 23 to 25 May and the implementation of measures to prevent the supply of oil to the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK).

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In response to a number of serious incidents and attacks on UNTAC personnel last fall, the Council had adopted resolution 792 condemning the failure by the PDK to comply with its obligations under the second phase of the cease-fire agreement concerning cantonment and demobilization of its forces. It had also demanded that the PDK allow United Nations peace-keepers to proceed with voter registration in the areas under its control, and called for measures to prevent oil supply to areas occupied by any Cambodian party not complying with the military provisions of the Paris Agreements.

The Secretary-General proposes in his report that the Council issue a broadening of last year's demand for compliance with the Paris Agreements, since the response of some of the Cambodian parties to resolution 792 had "not been satisfactory". Recalling the Declaration issued by Prince Norodom Sihanouk in which he condemned all acts of violence against Cambodians or foreigners, including United Nations personnel, the Secretary-General said the Council might want to issue a similar call.

The PDK had "again failed to avail itself of the many opportunities offered to it by UNTAC to rejoin the peace process", the report said. However, the Secretary-General wrote, it was important to resist any pressure to exclude PDK representatives from the Supreme National Council for Cambodia, because that framework still offered the best hope for a solution to the problems of Cambodia.

With regard to the interim period between the elections and the formation of the new Government, the Secretary-General stresses that, if all the parties maintain their forces in the field, as at present, it would be necessary to keep UNTAC's Military and Civilian Police Components in being, "at a gerater strength than previously seen". He also proposes that the Council consider whether the elected Government should, if it so wished, continue to receive international support in maintaining internal security after the new Government is formed.

The Security Council held consultations this afternoon on the Secretary-General's report on Cambodia, as well as on his report on the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia. It was also to consider a letter from France concerning the international tribunal on war crimes committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile, according to a spokesman for UNTAC, more than 300,000 Cambodians have returned home as part of the United Nations repatriation programme. Under the plan, which is a joint effort of UNTAC and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some 370,000 Cambodians are expected to return before the end of March.

The spokesman pointed out that more than 99 percent of the Cambodians have returned from seven camps inside Thailand. Some 2,000 Cambodians from Indonesia, Viet Nam and Malaysia had also returned under the programme. He added that all four parties to the Paris Agreements had scrupulously respected the returnees' freedom of choice of resettlement sites.

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In order to help the returnees reintegrate socially and economically, UNHCR had launched a series of projects, in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Component of UNTAC, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and various non-governmental organizations. In addition to providing vocational training, UNTAC had employed directly more than 1,200 returnees in a variety of jobs, the spokesman said.
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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, said today that she was suspending many of UNHCR operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina because of the "failure of all parties" to respect humanitarian principles.

According to a press release issued in Geneva today, the High Commissioner has decided, among other actions, to move UNHCR convoys back to their bases and immediately suspend all relief activities in Serbian-controlled Bosnia. She also recommended the suspension of all UNHCR activities in Sarajevo and withdrawal of most staff, leaving only a skeleton UNHCR presence in the besieged city of 380,000; suspension of land convoys and airlift to Sarajevo; and maintaining, at a reduced level, UNHCR relief operations in areas of Bosnia where UNHCR could still operate.

Mrs. Ogata said that the Bosnian Serbs were refusing to give humanitarian convoys access to more than 100,000 people besieged in eastern Bosnian villages. "The Croats were hampering delivery of relief supplies in other areas and now the Bosnian government itself is refusing to allow the distribution of relief to those so desperately in need in Sarajevo," she said.

"For months now," she pointed out, "UNHCR, United Nations staff and the non-governmental organizations have been risking their lives to deliver humanitarian assistance in the middle of a war to more than 3 million refugees, besieged and displaced persons in former Yugoslavia."

In a separate development, the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, held talks at Headquarters today with Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Vitaliy Churkin. According to their spokesman, Fred Eckhard, the Co-Chairmen were also scheduled to meet tomorrow morning with Reginald Bartholomew, the United States special envoy to the peace talks on former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Eckhard went on to say that discussions on the situation in Krajina had resumed this morning at Headquarters. The talks focused on the implementation of the Security Council's resolution 802 which called for a cessation of hostilities by Croatian armed forces and the return of heavy weapons seized by Serb forces from UNPROFOR storage areas.

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The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hans Blix, has requested a special inspection in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to clarify significant inconsistencies in samples and measurements of the country's declared nuclear inventory. The Agency has so far conducted six missions in the country.

According to a press release issued by the IAEA in Vienna yesterday, the purpose of the mission would be to gain access to two sites in the country. Both these elements are necessary for the Agency to verify the correctness and to assess the completeness of the country's nuclear inventory.

The Minister of Atomic Energy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Choi Hai Gun, will travel to Vienna with a delegation of experts later this week in an effort to clarify the inconsistencies.

The subject will be taken up by the IAEA Board of Governors at its meeting beginning on Monday, 22 February, at which time any clarification provided by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea can be taken into account, the agency said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a speech delivered at Waseda University in Tokyo today, underlined Japan's contribution to the United Nations during the post-cold-war area.

He noted that universities contributed in an important way not only to the transmission of knowledge, which was indispensable for the world's future leadership, but also to the formation of such qualities as criticism, responsibility, creativity and vision. Those qualities were necessary to form a new spirit of cooperation on the solid foundation of a United Nations of Member States and to create positive ideas to safeguard peace and promote economic and social progress.

The Secretary-General pointed out that both the United Nations and Japan were at crossroads, facing everyday's rapid changes. The age of ideology and all-encompassing theory had passed, and new solutions had to be found, he said.

The Secretary-General was awarded a honorary doctorate degree by Waseda University in Tokyo.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Lieutenant-General Cevik Bir of Turkey as Force Commander of the United Nations Operations in Somalia (ONUSOM II).

The new United Nations operation will take over the humanitarian relief effort in Somalia after the United States-led Unified Task Force, which was deployed late last year, leaves that country. Discussions are currently being held on the arrangements for the transition between the two operations.

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According to a United Nations spokesman today, the magnitude of the new United Nations operation would be about 25,000 troops and anticipated rules of engagement would be similar to those of the Unified Task Force. He added that a report of the Secretary-General on the matter was expected soon.

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